

SPARK GAP MARC

Johnson County EOC Undergoes Digital "Upgrade"

Johnson county E.O.C. is going d-i-g-i. Thanks to emergency management director Tug Sutton our radio room has two new RigBlasters. This radio to computer interface makes it possible to work PSK31, slow scan TV and other popular digital modes with the Kenwood HF rig. Tug purchased a second RigBlaster for use in the field. This acquisition puts Johnson County on par with the Indiana state EOC. State officials are gearing up to use PSK31 and SSTV to transmit critical data and pictures via Amateur Radio during disasters. Herb Caldwell-KF4BCG has developed a software interface for the state so they can strip the information off their disaster field report, send it via PSK31 and fill their official report forms back in on the other end.

Complimenting our digital radio room is the addition of APRS (automatic position reporting system) earlier this year. MARC maintains a 24-7 digipeater that helps connect APRS stations in Kentucky and Ohio with central Indiana. Several club members have gone on-line with APRS by sending their fixed or mobile positions. This digital mode has the capability of sending short messages station to station.

Jack-W8ISH, Chuck-KB9TEO, Herb-KF4BCG and Matt-KB9UJE spent a half-day following Thanksgiving installing and testing the new RigBlaster. A search is on now for anyone willing to donate a 486 or faster Pentium computer to the radio room. Contact the above named people if you can help.

A digital demo December 9th showed the potential for sending live data and pictures to other stations around the country. Questions? See Jack, Matt, Hershel or Herb for further details.

-W8ISH

The next club meeting will be January 20,
2001 at the EOC. Mark your calendar!

Date January, 2001

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payment and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

Editor

Matthew Payne (KB9UJE)
(317) 859-9194 E-mail editor@midstatehams.org

Publisher

Anna Leser (Johnson County EOC)
(317) 736-9064

Mailing and Circulation

Vernon Gill (N9QBO)
(317) 738-4575 E-mail gillv@juno.com

Reporters

Jack Parker (W8ISH)
(317) 881-0817 E-mail jparker@iquest.net
Barbara Rogers (KB9NOG)
(317) 738-2497 E-mail kb9nog2@juno.com

MARC Club Officers

President

J R Osborne
(KB9HSE)
(317) 933-3176

Secretary

Chuck Moser
(KB9TEO)
(317) 535-9733
moserc@fcsc.k12.in.us

RACES Director

J R Osborne
(KB9HSE)
(317) 933-3176

VE Coordinator

Dave Wendt
(KA9OOH)
(317) 974-1488
wendt@indv.net

Vice President

Joan Kemp
(N9DON)
lw Kemp@indv.net

Treasurer / ARES

Vernon Gill
(N9QBO)
(317) 738-4575
gillv@juno.com

Repeater Trustee

Matthew Payne
(KB9UJE)
(317) 859-9194
trustee@midstatehams.org

Activities Director

Jack Parker
(W8ISH)
(317) 881-0817
jparker@iquest.net

Active Committees

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Dave Daily
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Jack Parker
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(K9DBY)

Dave Wendt
(KA9OOH)

Al Soltis
(WA9ZET)

Larry Turner
(KB9PWN)

Other

Other

Matthew Payne
(KB9UJE)

Al Soltis
(WA9ZET)

Appointments

Appointments

Pending

Pending

Hershel Saylor
(WD9GMM)

MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, IN 46131

A SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB OF THE ARRL



A Friendly Reminder:

Please don't forget that dues for the year 2001 are due now!

If there are any questions, please see the club treasurer, Vern Gill, N9QBO.

Thanks for continuing to make the Mid State Amateur Radio Club the best in the state!

Don't forget the club net!

Join your friends on the air every Sunday night at **7:00 pm.**

Founding Member of MARC Receives Prestigious Award

Citing a commitment to Amateur Radio the Indiana Radio Club Council awarded Jack Parker-W8ISH, Outstanding Amateur of the Year. The award was presented during closing ceremonies at the annual Ft. Wayne Hamfest November 19th. Jack was one of nine outstanding hams nominated for the prestigious award by their respective Amateur Radio clubs. According to available records this is the first time a MARC club member has received the state honor.

In presenting the award, state ARRL ARES director Jim Sellers-K9ZBM, said Jack's past service to the Mid-State ARC in the capacity of President, Vice-President, activities director, VE, Amateur News Weekly correspondent and more recently as organizer of a series of Indiana Amateur Radio Club workshops earned him the outstanding Amateur award.

Chuck Crist-W9IH, long time friend of the Mid-State ARC was nominated for the award by the Indianapolis Amateur Radio Club. Indiana Section Manager Peggy Coulter-W9JUU assisted with the awards presentation. The Indiana Radio Club Council represents all clubs around the state regardless of ARRL affiliation.

-ARRL INDIANA

News From the Editors Desk.

First off, I would like to thank all of the amateurs who called and sent cards while I was in the hospital. It was nice to hear from all of you, and keep in touch with the outside world. I went into the hospital at the end of November for a series of skin graft operations. I would like to think that I gained new respect for anyone that chooses to undergo elective surgery. Everything was successful, and I feel like a new man! Anyone who has been in the hospital knows how nice it is to receive phone calls, cards, and visitors. I consider myself fortunate to have received all of the above.

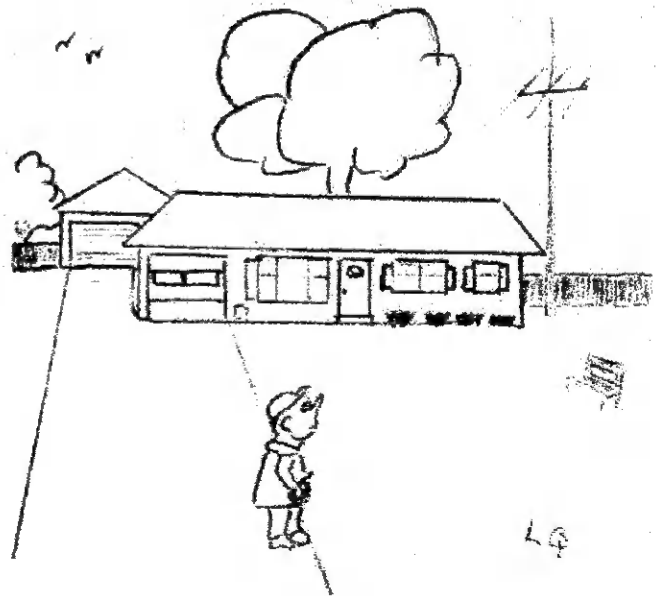
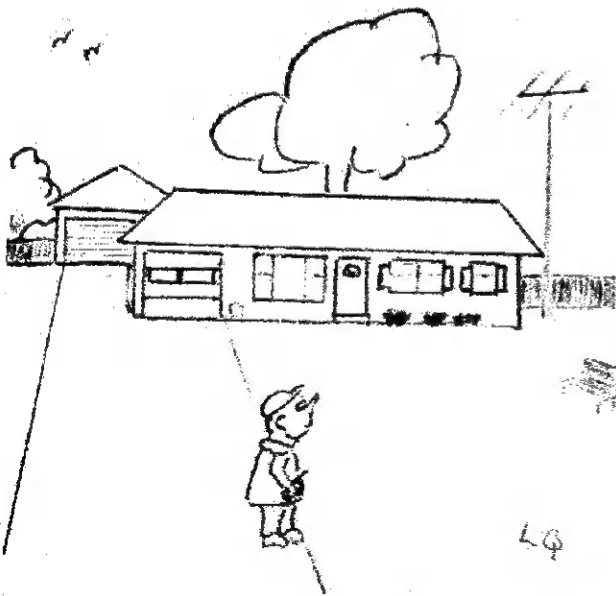
A special thanks also needs to be extended to Hershel Saylor, WD9GMM, who served as newsletter editor last month. I was in the hospital longer than I had expected, and Hershel's willingness to help out allowed the newsletter to go out as normal.

I would also like to extend an invitation to those members to which Santa left a "new toy" this holiday season. If it is amateur radio related, please consider writing a short article for the newsletter on your latest acquisition. Other hams may benefit from your firsthand knowledge. The Spark Gap is always looking for articles! Don't hesitate to send them my way. My email address is editor@midstatehams.org.

-KB9UJE

Can You Spot the Differences?

The answers are on the back page!



-KF9LQ

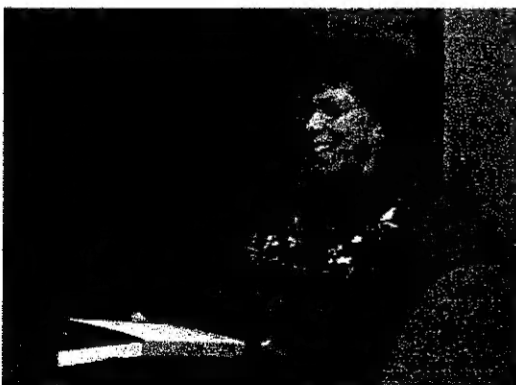
Pictures from Last Month's Meeting. If you were not there, here is what you missed!



Al Soltis-WA9ZET presents Annie Leser with a MARC plaque of Appreciation. Annie has been a close friend of the club for 16-years and retired December 28, 2000.

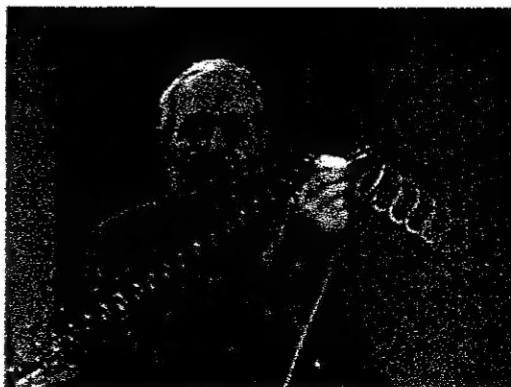


The Three Tenors, Al Soltis, JR Osborne and Bob LeGrange were singing praises for the all-band HF Slinky antenna.



Annie Leser beams with pride after receiving the MARC Plaque of Appreciation for her service to the club.

JR Osborne-KB9HSE demonstrated an all band Slinky HF antenna. It's small, simple and expands to cover all HF bands.



-W8ISH

Reset Restores AO-40 Transmission.

Merry Christmas, AMSAT--AO-40 is back! Following a 12-day silence, AO-40 once again is transmitting telemetry. In response to an L-band command sent Christmas Day by command station ZL1AOX, AO-40 resumed transmitting on 2.4 GHz. Software was reloaded to permit telemetry transmissions on 2401.305 MHz. Some problems remain on the satellite, however.

"Recovery of AO-40 continues, and some housekeeping tasks were performed by the command stations to improve and stabilize the situation," said Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, of the AO-40 team. Guelzow says new software routines were loaded successfully to restore the battery-charge regulator system and other housekeeping functions. "We will now start a detailed analysis of the situation," he said.

Telemetry transmissions from AO-40 ceased December 13 while ground controllers were testing the onboard 400-Newton propulsion system following an initial orbital shift. Some observers feared the satellite had been irreparably damaged. Guelzow says ground stations now have regained control of the satellite. Ground controllers hope the telemetry might yield some clues about what went wrong aboard the satellite to make it stop transmitting.

After onboard software watchdog routines failed to restart beacon transmissions automatically, a full reset command and an initialization block to switch on the S2 S-band transmitter were sent via L-band.

Guelzow said telemetry revealed that some temperature sensors have failed and some current sensors indicated incorrect values, but solar sensors seemed to be working fine. The good news was that AO-40's power situation--in particular the battery voltages--looks nominal.

Guelzow said additional software would be loaded in the next few days and the various uplinks checked out before any attempts are made to turn the 2-meter transmitter back on. "Clearly, we need more time to analyze and understand what has happened here," Guelzow said. He said that while there are no indications that the 2-meter beacon transmitter has failed, ground controllers don't want to risk losing communication again. "So for the next days the spacecraft will continue to be transmitting on S-Band only," he said.

Phase 3D Project Leader Karl Meinzer, DJ4ZC said AO-40 command stations "will continue to follow a conservative philosophy" with a primary goal of not causing additional damage while retaining as much evidence as possible to analyze what made the beacon transmissions stop.

On December 22, AMSAT proposed holding an inquiry into the incident that led to the loss of communication with AO-40. A letter from AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH, said "AMSAT believes that it is in the best interests of our organization to determine all the facts surrounding this incident and to make sure that a similar situation cannot happen again either on AO-40 or on a future satellite."

-ARRL Letter

Local Hams Celebrate Kids Day 2001

It didn't take long for Jacob LeSage to catch on. "My name is Jacob, I am eight years old, I live in Greenwood, Indiana. My favorite color is Red, over." From the sound of it, Kids Day 2001 was a major success across the country and Canada. Working 10 meters side band, he told two kids in Washington State that he played baseball and football. On 15 meters the North Grove 2nd grader told his new friends in California that he had three dogs. Jacob helped 12-year old Chris in Vermont feel good about making his first contact on HF radio.

By the time he was done Jacob had nearly a dozen contacts with kids in California, Vermont, Canada, Texas and Washington State. For Jacob it not only was a lesson in Amateur Radio, but a lesson in stateside geography.

Jacob and his dad John LeSage-KB9TSG, worked the world from the W8ISH ham shack. John is a Tech class operator and has vowed to get his General class upgrade so he and Jacob can once again experience the thrill of working the airwaves and playing ham radio just like the other kids.

-W8ISH



Teach the new licensees all you know. We've needed numbers for a long time. Respect this wonderful legacy known as Amateur Radio that our mentors and Elmers gave us. Every time you key the mike or hit the key, think about what a legacy you were given and your duty to pass it on.

-Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH

Snowbound ham uses 2-meter H-T to call for help

Suffering recently from bronchitis and pneumonia, Jim Stewart, KK7VL, a homesteader in a secluded area near Bettas Pass, Washington, used his 2-meter hand-held to summon help. Stewart called his friend, Jim Flint, W7TXU, on the Kittitas County Repeater Association's repeater, advising him of his worsening condition and requesting assistance.

Flint, a member of the Kittitas County Search and Rescue team, enlisted the help of Deputy Sheriff Robb Lipp. But, snowdrifts prevented them from reaching Stewart's home. A snowmobiler passing by took the rescuers to Stewart's house. Lipp then used his GPS and radio to guide a rescue helicopter to the scene, and Stewart was airlifted to a hospital in Yakima.

"Many of our present rescue team members are already hams," said Flint, "and as a result of this rescue being reported on local radio, several people have called and asked to join our team, and to learn more about Amateur Radio."--The Daily Record (Ellensburg, Washington)

-ARRL Letter

Answers, from Page 4

1. Antenna
2. Tree
3. Doorknob
4. Fence
5. Shutter
6. Bushes

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